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U.S. DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE

CURRENT SERIAL RECORD

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

HOW IT SERVES YOU

"...to acquire and diffuse among
the people of the United States
useful information on subjects
connected with agriculture..."

--Act Creating USDA



Office of Information
U.S. Department of Agriculture

The United States Department of Agriculture

—How It Serves You

Every day your life and the lives of your family and friends are affected by the services of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. It is involved directly or indirectly with —

The food on your table,

The cotton or wool in your clothes,

The wood in your house and its furnishings.

How It Started

In 1862 President Lincoln approved an Act of Congress creating the Department of Agriculture, "the general design and duties of which shall be to acquire and diffuse among the people of the United States useful information on subjects connected with agriculture in the most general and comprehensive sense of that word...."

In 1889 the Department, again by Act of Congress, became the eighth Executive Department in the Federal Government with Cabinet rank.

How It Works

In Washington, D. C., the Secretary of Agriculture and his staff direct the programs and activities assigned to the Department by Congress. In every part of the United States, and in many foreign countries, employees administer programs and carry out responsibilities authorized by Congress.

As new laws have added to its functions, the Department has grown. It currently is organized into various service and administrative agencies, which are divided into major groups. (See back page.) An Assistant Secretary or other designated official heads each group and interprets and executes its policies.

Relationship To Land-Grant Colleges

In 1862 Congress passed and President Lincoln signed the Land-Grant College Act. This Act donated 11 million acres of public lands to the States and Territories to provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts.

This Act was followed by others to strengthen the experimental and extension activities of the States in their relations with the Department.

In 1887 Congress authorized an agricultural experiment station in each State and Territory. In 1914 it established the Cooperative Extension Service to extend agricultural and home economics research information of the Department and land-grant colleges to farmers and other people.

ACTIVITIES OF USDA

Research

Six USDA agencies conduct research. The Administrator of the Agricultural Research Service coordinates the work.

The Department works closely on research programs with State experiment stations, departments of agriculture, schools of forestry, and cooperative and other public and private agencies. It administers Federal-grant funds voted for the States by Congress.

Agricultural Research Service. Carries out research on crops, farm and land management, livestock, human nutrition and home economics. Also develops new and expanded uses for farm commodities.

Conducts control and regulatory programs, including plant and animal quarantines, meat inspection, and others.

Administers Federal-grant funds to experiment stations of the land-grant colleges.

Agricultural Marketing Service. Conducts research to expand markets for farm and food products and to cut marketing costs. Also provides current crop and livestock estimates and data on farm income, prices, population, etc.

Farmer Cooperative Service. Carries on research to help agricultural co-ops that market farm products, purchase farm supplies, and supply other business services.

Foreign Agricultural Service. Helps private trade maintain and expand agricultural exports through broad research and reporting on foreign developments affecting U. S. agriculture.

Forest Service. Conducts research on growing and harvesting timber; improving water and range resources; protecting forests from fire, insects, and disease; the use of wood products and developing new ones; and improving methods of marketing forest products.

Soil Conservation Service. Classifies soils in a nationwide system, finds out how they respond to different treatments, and otherwise improves understanding of soils.

Education

Cooperative Extension Service is the field educational arm of the Department and land-grant colleges. Its work is jointly sponsored and financed by Federal, State, and local governments. The Federal Extension Service represents USDA in this activity.

In every rural county, extension workers conduct an educational program designed to help farm families and others use research findings and other Government aids. Through this program extension workers provide assistance toward more efficient production and marketing of agricultural products, improved family living, and the advancement of community affairs.

Farmer Cooperative Service carries on educational work to help farmers improve the effectiveness of their cooperatives. In these activities it cooperates with land-grant colleges, State extension offices and county agents, and with cooperatives, and the state and national organizations representing these farmer businesses.

Information

Each USDA agency provides information on its work for farmers, homemakers, and others. The **Office of Information** coordinates:

Publications, technical and popular, which present research results, program, regulatory, and other information on the work of USDA.

Current Information, which includes press, radio and television materials.

Visuals, which include exhibits, photos, graphics, and motion pictures.

Marketing

The **Agricultural Marketing Service** carries out marketing and distribution programs, and works with States on marketing problems. Its Administrator coordinates the statistical work of the Department.

Administers 16 Federal Regulatory Acts, marketing agreements and orders, the national school lunch program, and other food distribution and surplus removal programs.

Does inspection, grading, and standardization work in cotton, dairy, fruits and vegetables, grain, livestock, poultry, and tobacco.

Collects and disseminates market news on farm products in major producing and marketing areas.

The **Foreign Agricultural Service** administers USDA foreign programs in the interest of U. S. agriculture, with special emphasis on market promotion abroad. Maintains attachés at more than 50 foreign posts.

The **Commodity Exchange Authority** supervises futures trading on commodity exchanges.

Conservation

The **Agricultural Conservation Program Service** administers the national program that shares with farmers and ranchers costs of approved soil and water conserving practices in the public interest. Field work is done through Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committees.

The **Soil Conservation Service** develops and carries out a national soil and water conservation program through 2,800 soil conservation districts.

Carries out USDA responsibilities in projects to protect small watersheds and prevent floods and in river basin investigations.

Plans and applies measures and practices that reduce flood damage in 11 major watersheds.

Makes and coordinates snow surveys for water forecasting in the Western States.

Administers the Federal part of the National Cooperative Soil Survey.

The **Forest Service** administers 148 national forests—181 million acres—for the best use and conservation of their resources, including water, timber, outdoor recreation, wildlife, and range. It manages national forest watersheds to regulate streamflow, control floods, protect water sources for industrial power, irrigation, and home use. It carries on cooperative work with States to aid private forest landowners.

Stabilization

The **Commodity Stabilization Service** is responsible for—

- Acreage allotments and marketing quotas, to help keep supplies in line with demand.
- Soil Bank, to divert land from production of excess supplies and put it to conservation use.
- Price support for numerous commodities.
- Disposal of surpluses, through sales, barter, transfer, donation, and other means.
- Helping obtain adequate storage for farm products—commercial storage as well as on the farm.
- Administering the Sugar Act and the International Wheat Agreement.

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation State and County Committees are key units in CSS's field organization.

The **Commodity Credit Corporation** directs and finances some CSS programs, including price support, storage facilities, surplus commodity disposal, and others. CCC uses CSS personnel and facilities. The CCC Board is subject to the general supervision and direction of the Secretary of Agriculture.

The **Federal Crop Insurance Corporation** gives farmers a chance to insure crops against loss from causes beyond their control such as weather, insects, and disease. FCIC operates its programs in nearly one-third of the Nation's farm counties.

Credit

The **Farmers Home Administration** provides credit for certain farmers who cannot get the needed financing elsewhere at reasonable rates and terms.

Loans are made through local FHA offices. A county committee passes on eligibility, farm values, and borrowers' progress.

Credit is provided for farm operating expenses, farm ownership, building construction, refinancing, and soil and water conservation.

Loans to meet emergency needs are made in areas hard hit by adverse weather conditions and other disasters.

The **Rural Electrification Administration** makes loans to extend central station electric service to unserved rural people. Most borrowers are nonprofit cooperative associations. The systems are locally owned and managed.

REA also makes loans to furnish and improve rural telephone service. Loans are made to telephone companies and to nonprofit groups.

The **Farm Credit Administration**, which supervises a nationwide system of credit cooperatives, is independent of the Department of Agriculture. The Secretary of Agriculture names 1 of the 13 FCA Board Members.

For further information about the services and publications of USDA, contact your local county extension agent, or any State or local office of USDA, or write to—

Office of Information
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Washington 25, D. C.

HOW USDA IS ORGANIZED

SECRETARY

Under Secretary

Staff Assistants

Office of the General Counsel

Departmental Administration

Administrative Assistant Secretary

Administrative Management, Office of

Budget and Finance, Office of

Hearing Examiners, Office of

Information, Office of

Library

Personnel, Office of

Plant and Operations, Office of

Federal-States Relations

Assistant Secretary

Agricultural Conservation Program Service

Agricultural Research Service

Farmer Cooperative Service

Federal Extension Service

Forest Service

Soil Conservation Service

Marketing and Foreign Agriculture

Assistant Secretary

Agricultural Marketing Service

Commodity Exchange Authority

Foreign Agricultural Service

Agricultural Stabilization

Assistant Secretary

Commodity Credit Corporation

Commodity Stabilization Service

Agricultural Stabilization and

Conservation Committees

Federal Crop Insurance Corporation

Agricultural Credit Services

Director

Farmers Home Administration

Rural Electrification Administration

(Note: The Farm Credit Administration was established by Congress as an independent agency effective December 4, 1953. The Secretary of Agriculture names one of the 13 Board Members. Headquarters offices are maintained in the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.)